



EXPLORE NONFICTION



SETTING THE SCENE

Book Display. Create a display of fun facts and strange laws. Set out some trivia books and blank cards. Invite kids to write down their favorite hard-to-believe fact to add to the display.

Bulletin Board. Find travel posters online and cover a bulletin board with them. Title the board “Reading Can Take You Anywhere.” Set up a book display nearby to highlight nonfiction resources on different countries.

Informative Decorations. Decorate your endcaps with images of what the shelves contain. For example, put dinosaur clip art on the endcap of the books in the 567 section and images of aliens and Bigfoot on the 000–100s. This will make browsing nonfiction easy for even your youngest patrons.

Guess Who? On a wall or bulletin board, put up a silhouette of a famous person and one of the person’s most well-known quotes. In the silhouette, write the call number where a biography of the person can be located.

Change your famous person each week, or as soon as all the biographies of the person in your silhouette are checked out!

Incentives. Make sure to stock up on Dewey See It? Bookmarks (http://upstartpromotions.com/upstart/Deweyreg-See-It-Jumbo-Bookmarks-c_131396/). These can be given out as trivia prizes, reading goal incentives, or rewards for participation in games.

GAMES/CONTESTS

Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction Trivia. Put together a list of fun trivia; include some made-up “facts.” Divide kids into teams. Read one of the facts aloud, or let the kids pick facts from a pile. Going in turns, challenge the teams to decide if the amazing “facts” are actually true or if they are invented. Other teams can dispute the answer, but they have to prove themselves by locating the information in a nonfiction book from the library.

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Pick a Stick. Put nonfiction numbers on popsicle sticks and place the sticks in a jar. Encourage kids to pick a stick, find the corresponding section in the library, and check out a book from it. Give them a sticker or bookmark as a reward for checking out the book. This is a great way to encourage kids to explore nonfiction that they would normally not browse.

Dewey Bingo. Create bingo cards with the Dewey decimal numbers for different nonfiction sections. As kids check out books that correspond to the numbers, mark their cards. Have a special prize for kids who complete their bingo cards. Incorporate nonfiction reading into your summer reading program by handing out bingo cards with the regular reading logs.

Crime Scene Investigators. Rope off an area of the library with crime scene tape. Set up a “crime scene” using footprints, photographs, “official” files, and other props that kids can study to solve the crime. Have the kids work in teams to see who can solve the mystery first. See <http://judyconnell.com/2010/08/14/body-in-the-library>.

ARTS/CRAFTS

Snowflakes. Snow is fascinating! Penguins and polar bears live in it, and scientists come from around the world to study it at research stations in the Arctic and Antarctica. Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley, a scientist, discovered that each snowflake is unique and that they each have six sides. Study some up-close photos of real snowflakes, share *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, and then make your own snowflakes out of paper and glitter.

Shark Masks. Display some shark facts (They don’t have bones! They have two rows of teeth!) and pictures of different kinds of sharks. Let kids design and make their own shark masks, and then have them guess what kinds of sharks each other made. Get instructions for making paper-plate shark jaws at <http://dollarstorecrafts.com/2011/08/make-paper-plate-shark-jaws>.

Dinosaur Brain Jewelry. Stegosaurus is often said to have had a brain the size of a walnut. Do some research to find out if this is true! Compare the size of

a Stegosaurus brain to its body. Then let the kids paint some walnut shells (emptied of nuts) to look like what they imagine a dinosaur brain would look like. Make the shells into a necklace, a bracelet, or even earrings.

Origami. The folding of paper for art and fun can be traced back to the invention of paper, and Buddhist monks have been doing it since the sixth century. Display a selection of books on origami, both traditional and modern, and have kids investigate it. How did people traditionally use origami, and why? What is its place in Japanese culture? Put out a pile of origami paper (or construction paper cut into 6-inch squares) along with instructions for simple origami crafts. Let the kids make away. If they want to leave their creations to help decorate the library, all the better!

SNACKS/RECIPES

Tasting Party. Serve star fruit, purple carrots, orange cauliflower, nopalitos (pickled cactus), and any other exotic fruits and veggies you can get your hands on. Specialty markets and Asian grocery stores often have a collection of produce that your kids might not be familiar with.

Oreo “Dirt” Pudding with Gummy Worms. Get a recipe for this fun treat at www.obnuts.com/blog/dirt-pudding-cups-with-gummy-worms-recipe.

Edible Coal. Make Rice Krispies Treats with black food coloring. Get the recipe at www.sheknows.com/food-and-recipes/articles/1024643/christmas-coal-recipe.

Fossil Cookies. Buy tubes of sugar cookie dough. Put out a selection of plastic bugs (make sure to wash them first). Slice the cookies, and then let kids press the plastic bugs into the slices to make fossil shapes. Or make the cookies ahead of time and challenge the kids to match the fossil shape to the bug.

WRITING PROJECTS

Creature Features. Share a few passages from the book *Creature Features: 25 Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. Invite

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kids to pick an animal of their choosing from your nonfiction collection. Have them identify a unique feature of their animal and then create a story to explain why the animal has that feature. Later, have them use their books to find the real answer.

Comic Time! Using an overhead projector, share the opening scenes, or the whole book, of *El Deafo* by Cece Bell. Then have kids make up their own short comic about something that happened in their life. It can be what they did to get ready for school, a favorite memory, or a challenge that they had to overcome. Download free comic strip templates at <http://comicbookpaper.com>, or have kids make their comics online with www.makebeliefscomix.com.

Describe Yourself. Have kids write a short descriptive paragraph about themselves. Challenge them to focus on describing their skills, abilities, interests, or personality, and to not use any physical descriptions, such as hair color, body shape, or height.

Favorite Person. Have kids choose a book about their favorite famous person (historical or contemporary). Encourage them to create a biographical poem about the person that includes characteristics and facts they learned from their book.

Unlikely Friends. After sharing *Tarra & Bella: The Elephant and Dog Who Became Best Friends* by Carol Buckley, have kids create their own story about how two unlikely friends meet for the first time. They could use different types of animals, aliens, or even monsters!

SPECIAL EVENTS

Historical Figure Costume Party. How often do Eleanor Roosevelt and Gandhi get to share punch? Throw a costume party, and invite kids to dress up as their favorite historical figure. Have Famous Face Masks on hand for children who don't have costumes or for photo-booth fun. Print out portraits of famous figures, cut holes for the eyes and mouth, and attach to popsicle sticks.

Cryptozoologist Creature Hunt. Place fun facts about unusual animals and legendary creatures (like Bigfoot

and Nessie) around the library. Hide pictures or stuffed-animal versions of the creatures throughout the library. Send kids on a scavenger hunt to find each creature and place it with the fact about that creature. Once they've matched all the creatures to the facts, have them decide whether the creatures are real or imaginary.

This can also be done as an interactive bulletin board by posting pictures of the creatures (labeled with a number or letter) and providing a list of the creatures next to the board. Have kids write the letter/number of the creature next to its name.

Pirate Party. Pirates are always in fashion. Set up stations with various activities, such as walking the plank, tossing coconuts through a palm tree stand up, or pinning the hook on the pirate. Create a "Pirates: Fact or Fiction?" bulletin board and display books about the real history of pirates. Check Pinterest for ideas on snacks, decorations, and more.

MATH/SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

Naked Eggs. Place white vinegar in a clear plastic container. Place a raw egg (with shell still on!) in the vinegar, making sure it is completely covered. Put plastic wrap over the container. After 24–48 hours, come back to the library to see your bouncy, "naked" egg! Learn about the science behind this experiment at <http://imaginationstationtoledo.org/content/2011/04/how-to-make-a-naked-egg>.

Candy Experiments. Set up stations where kids can test out different experiments from www.candyexperiments.com.

Make Your Own Bouncy Ball. For each ball that you make, you'll need:

- 1 Tbs. white glue
- 1/2 tsp. borax powder (can be found in the laundry detergent aisle of most grocery stores)
- food coloring
- 3 Tbs. cornstarch
- 4 Tbs. warm water

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You will also need small containers for mixing (at least two; more if you want to make multiple balls or colors) and stirring straws.

Combine the warm water, corn starch, and borax. In a separate container, mix the white glue with a few drops of food coloring. Pour the water mixture over the glue. You will see a clump form. Keep stirring until you have one large glob. Roll the glob in your hands until it makes a hard, round ball that isn't sticky anymore. Get more information at <http://chemistry.about.com/od/demonstrationsexperiments/ss/bounceball.htm>.

WEBSITES & APPS

National Geographic Kids Weird But True App

http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/kids/en_US/explore/weird-but-true

PBS Kids Dinosaur Train Game

<http://pbskids.org/dinosaurtrain>

Amusement Park Physics

www.learner.org/interactives/parkphysics

BOOK RESOURCES

- *Bugs: How Insects Changed History*, by Sarah Albee. Walker Childrens, 2014. ISBN 9780802734235. 3–6.
- *Candy Experiments*, by Lorelee Leavitt. Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2013. ISBN 9781449418366. 1–6.
- *Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles*, by Tonya Lee Stone. Candlewick, 2013. ISBN 9780763665487. 4–8.
- *Creature Features: 25 Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do*, by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014. ISBN 9780544233515. PK–3.
- *El Deafo*, by Cece Bell. Abrams, 2014. ISBN 9781419712173. 1–5.
- *Disasters: Natural and Man-Made Catastrophes through the Centuries*, by Brenda Z. Guiberson. Henry Holt, 2010. ISBN 9780805081701. 4–9.
- *The Dolphins of Shark Bay*, by Pamela S. Turner. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN 9780547716381. 4–8.
- *Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives*, by Elizabeth Rusch. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN 9780547503509. 4–8.
- *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia*, by Candace Fleming. Schwartz & Wade, 2014. ISBN 9780375867828. 6–9.
- *The Flying Machine Book: Build and Launch 35 Rockets, Gliders, Helicopters, Boomerangs, and More*, by Bobby Mercer. Chicago Review Press, 2012. ISBN 9781613740866. 3–9.
- *The Griffin and the Dinosaur*, by Marc Aronson and Adrienne Mayor. National Geographic Children's Books, 2014. ISBN 9781426311086. 4–9.
- *Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*, by Katherine Applegate. Clarion, 2014. ISBN 9780544252301. PK–3.
- *Life-Size Farm*, by Teruyuki Komiya. Seven Footer Press, 2012. ISBN 9781934734582. PK–2.
- *Lincoln's Grave Robbers*, by Steve Sheinkin. Scholastic, 2013. ISBN 9780545405720. 4–8.
- *125 True Stories of Amazing Animals*, by National Geographic Kids. National Geographic Children's Books, 2012. ISBN 9781426309182. 3–8.
- *Alex the Parrot: No Ordinary Bird*, by Stephanie Spinner. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2012. ISBN 9780375868467. 2–6.
- *Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring*, by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan. Flash Point, 2010. ISBN 9781596433380. 1–5.
- *Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade*, by Melissa Sweet. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2011. ISBN 9780547199450. PK–3.
- *A Black Hole Is Not a Hole*, by Carolyn Cinami DeCristofano. Charlesbridge, 2012. ISBN 9781570917837. 4–8.
- *The Boy on the Wooden Box*, by Leon Leyson. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN 9781442497818. 4–9.

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- *Look Up! Birdwatching in Your Own Backyard*, by Annette LeBlanc Cate. Candlewick, 2013. ISBN 9780763645618. 3–7.
- *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*, by Brian Floca. Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books, 2009. ISBN 9781416950462. PK–5.
- *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales: One Dead Spy*, by Nathan Hale. Abrams, 2012. ISBN 9781419703966. 3–7.
- *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*, by Cindy Trumbore. Lee & Low, 2013. ISBN 9781620140048. 1–4.
- *Primates: The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas*, by Jim Ottavani. First Second, 2013. ISBN 978-1596438651. 5–9.
- *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance*, by Jennifer Armstrong. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2000. ISBN 9780375810497. 3–6.
- *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*, by Jen Bryant. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN 9780375867125. K–3.
- *The Story of Buildings: From the Pyramids to the Sydney Opera House and Beyond*, by Patrick Dillon. Candlewick, 2014. ISBN 9780763669904. 3–8.
- *Tarra & Bella: The Elephant and Dog Who Became Best Friends*, by Carol Buckley. Putnam Juvenile, 2009. ISBN 9780399254437. PK–2.
- *Titanic: Voices from the Disaster*, by Deborah Hopkinson. Scholastic, 2012. ISBN 9780545116749. 3–9.